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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S., IRAN, SUDAN, AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN,
ENVIRONMENT;BERLIN

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- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

Headlines in the print media focused on coalition talks in Berlin.

Die Welt opened with an interview the Russian Newsweek conducted
with
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, FAZ centered on Czech President

Klaus's intention to sign the Lisbon Treaty, and FT Deutschland on
monetary problems between the EU and China, while die tageszeitung
dealt with the offensive of the Pakistani armed forces against the
Taliban. Editorials centered on the coalition talks, the upcoming
signing of the sales contract for Opel, and a debate over the
vaccination against the H1N1 flu virus. ZDF-TV's early evening
newscast heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau also
opened with reports on the coalition talks.

- [1](#)2. (U.S.) Clinton Interview

Die Welt (10/19) carried a front-page interview which the
editor-in-
chief of Russia's edition of Newsweek, Michael Fishman conducted
with
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her visit to Moscow last
week. The daily added that the interview will also be published in

Russia today. The paper carried a front-page picture with the
secretary smiling and a caption saying: "No looking back, Secretary

Clinton is not only trying to improve relations with the Russian government, but she also wants to support Russian human rights groups which are trying to improve life [in Russia]." The headline of the interview is a remark by the Secretary saying: "I do not want to Seek Someone who is to Blame." The sub-title summarizes the interview, writing: "Welt interview: U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Russia, Missiles, and the Treatment of Iran." Die Welt wrote in an article on its front page: U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is trying to develop a joint missile defense system with Russia in the fight against extremism and terrorism. Clinton said in the interview with Die Welt: 'We think that a joint missile defense system for our states would be reasonable. We see each other confronted with the same dangers, namely an Iran in possession of nuclear weapons or such weapons in the hands of a terrorist network.' That is why it is time to cooperate in our own interest. 'We are on a path in the right direction since President Obama has changed his plans for a missile defense shield in Europe,' Clinton added." The full text of the interview appeared on page five.

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13. (Iran) Bombings

All papers carried extensive coverage of the bombing that killed several commanders of the Revolutionary Guards. Sueddeutsche (10/19) headlined: "Attack on Revolutionary Guards in Iran," and added that "the most serious attack on the Revolutionary Guards over the past few years emphasizes the increasing instability in the region." Frankfurter Allgemeine (10/19) reported under the headline: "Iranian Generals Killed in Attack" that "the great majority of Sunni Baluchis, primarily found in the Province of Sistan Baluchistan, opposes the Shiite rulers. The Iranian news agency ISNA reported that the Sunni Dchundullah underground group assumed responsibility for the attack. Iran's state TV only spoke of a local Sunni rebel group, while revolutionary guards claimed 'foreign elements' with relations to the Untied States were responsible for the attack." Die Welt (10/19) headlined: "High-ranking Iranian Revolutionary Guards killed in Bombing," and wrote: "Iran's Parliamentary President Larijani said: 'We are of the opinion that the most recent terror attacks refer back to the United States.' He added that President Obama announced a policy of an 'extended hand,' but with this action he has 'burnt his hand. Washington rejected the accusations. U.S. spokesman Ian Kelly said: 'We condemn this terrorist attack and regret the death of innocent people. Reports of an U.S. involvement are totally wrong, he said.

In an editorial, Frankfurter Rundschau (10/19) wrote: "The bombing is shaking a central pillar of the Iranian power structure on which the regime under Ayatollah Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad is

increasingly dependent. But the bombing also reveals other conflicts that are smoldering under the surface, conflicts that have been ignored since the controversial presidential elections. The Sunni minority feels suppressed by the Shiite headquarters and is calling for greater self-determination, even though this demand is going hand in hand with the continued activity of the drug, human trafficking and ransom industries."

According to Financial Times Deutschland (10/19), "the Revolutionary Guards seemed to be invincible in the summer, but yesterday's attack shows that they are not invulnerable and that they do not always have everything under control. Even though the attacker did not come from the opposition ranks the regime cannot like the pillars of their power being hit. The political system in Iran is not a house of cards. It has been set up in such a way that it can also govern

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against the majority. The question is for how long the powers-that-be are able to stand this course. That is why they are using all means available to return to the state of control before the mass protests on June 12. But the unrest in the country is so great that a new outbreak of protests is likely."

Tagesspiegel (10/19) judged under the headline: "The bombing Also Casts Light onto Iran's Opium Problem," and argued: "Almost half of the opium from Afghanistan destined for France, Italy, Germany, and France is being transferred by Iranian drug couriers across southern Iran to the North. Iran's province of Sistan Beluchistan at the border to Pakistan and Afghanistan is considered the most dangerous in the country. Tehran is now having the same experience as all other transit countries: a considerable part of the cargo gets stuck on the way to the North to the detriment of the health of its own young people. But Europe is looking away. For years, Iran has not received any support to counter the activities of these drug gangs."

14. (Sudan) New U.S. Strategy

Under the headline: "Less Pressure, Greater Stimulus," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (10/19) noted: "Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will announce a new U.S. strategy towards Iran this Monday. In the future, Washington will try to intensify cooperation with the regime in Khartoum in order to improve the situation in the crisis province of Darfur. President Obama's special envoy Scott Gration said that the United States wants to use a mixture of 'stimuli and pressure' to stop the persecution of the people in Darfur."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (10/19) editorialized under the headline: "More Carrot Than Stick," and wrote: "Basheer's promotion to a U.S. anti-terror ally is not an appropriate step to enthrone Obama's left-wing supporters, because he used the Darfur example to criticize George

1W.

Bush of a lack of self-assertion. This policy is also grist to the mill of the right wing. They are afraid that the President, with his multiple 'extended hands' to Russia, Iran, Burma, and North Korea, will also become entangled in Sudan, and that, in the end, the United States will be chained. But Obama continues to make his first moves and knows only one thing: his predecessor's methods were not very successful."

Under the headline: "Waltz with Basheer," Tagesspiegel (10/19) editorialized: "In the election campaign, President Obama represented a tough policy against Sudanese President Basheer, but now the U.S.

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government has presented a Sudan policy that gives up the plan to completely ostracize the dictator. There are several reasons for this: the peace treaty that was concluded between the North and the South is about to fail. U.S. Sudan envoy Scott Gration is convinced that there will be no solution without Basheer. In view of the complex realities in the country, the Obama administration has bid farewell to a policy that was based on human rights. This is bitter but also wise. The international arrest warrant against Basheer has only made the dictator stronger. It is difficult but necessary to find the right distance, for otherwise, there will soon be a new war in Sudan."

15. (Afghanistan) Future Strategy

Under the headline; "Obama Supporters Losing Patience," Financial Times Deutschland (10/19) reported: "Following a tough conservative campaign against his healthcare reform, President Obama has to counter mounting criticism from his own camp. Primarily the increase in U.S. forces in Afghanistan is making Democrats angry. But in return, for many of his controversial political plans, he is finding unusual supporters: Republican lawmakers. Some have indicated that they would back his planned increase of troops in Afghanistan to up to 40,000 forces. With this shift, conservative lawmakers could turn into the strongest allies of the Democratic president in questions of national security. At the same time, the gap would widen that has developed between Obama, the party's rank and file and leading Democrats."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (10/19) opined in a front-page editorial: "It is time for the international community to cut the knot and make up its mind on an increase of forces in Afghanistan. It is true that the coming winter will result in a reduction of combat activities but the Afghan population will draw its own conclusions from the ongoing insecurity [in the West] and on its future engagement in their country. This is also one way to lose the hearts and minds of the people. The situation is being aggravated because of a second dilemma: the presidential elections have not clarified the political situation. On the contrary, forming a unity government in this situation does not sound like such a bad option. It would, in fact,

be
the lesser evil, although it would not correspond to the
Constitution
and would be unlikely to prevent the rivals [Karzai and Abdullah]
from
paralyzing each other, to stem corruption and to keep the central
government from losing the rest of its credibility."

Under the headline: "Karzai Prevents Afghanistan's Reconstruction,"

Die Welt (10/19) opined: "It is time to strike a different tone
towards the Afghan president. President Obama's refusal to tell

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Karzai what to do before a resolution to the Afghan election crisis
has been found, is a move in the right direction, even though the
West
cannot afford to let the matter go unresolved. But with this step,
Washington is making clear that Karzai, too, has to meet conditions
before the West intensifies its engagement. In the meantime, people
at the NATO headquarters in Kabul are discussing whether local
structures can be better build from the bottom up and whether NATO
should seek its own governors and police leaders who are more
competent and less corrupt. But in his own interest, Karzai should
understand one thing soon: life will also go on without him."

According to regional daily Trierischer Volksfreund (10/19),
"President Obama plans to define his new Afghanistan strategy in the
coming weeks. He would be well-advised to include the most recent
provocative attitude of Afghanistan's President Karzai into
consideration when deciding this important political question.
There
can be no doubt that there were massive manipulations by his
supporters in the election and that these manipulations were covered
up by high ranking officials. That is why it is time that Obama,
but
also the rest of the world, make clear to Karzai the following: our
military concept and the question of civilian engagement will orient
clearly to the credibility and the reliability of the Afghan
President."

16. (Pakistan) Government Offensive

In its offensive against the Taliban, the Pakistani government wants
to put an end to attacks from opponents on the army headquarters,"
Frankfurter Allgemeine (10/19) argued, and added: "But one of the
effects of this offensive will be that, among the hundreds of
thousands of people, who will now flee from Southern Waziristan,
there
will be many 'insurgents' and terrorists who will flee to rugged
mountainous regions and to Afghanistan. Next spring it will become
clear whether the Af/Pak complex can be controlled militarily and
politically."

In an editorial under the headline: "Fateful Offensive," die
tageszeitung (10/19) judged: "This offensive makes clear that the
survival of Pakistan as a halfway secular and democratic state is at
stake. It is totally open whether the fight against the Taliban can
even be won. Even the smaller offensive in the SWAT Valley early
this
year was not a sound success and the opponent in South Waziristan is
much more powerful. That is why there are only two possible

scenarios: either the armed forces really win the upper hand against the Taliban, making them stronger than any time before, or they will get involved in a guerilla war in which they must conclude dubious deals with the opponents - which would result in a worrying

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radicalization of Pakistan. The only possibility of the international community to counter such a development is to help the Zadari government quickly and unbureaucratically achieve a civilian success."

17. (Environment) Copenhagen Climate Talks

According to Handelsblatt(10/19), the EU is not making any progress in its preparatory talks for the Copenhagen Climate summit (December 7 - 18, 2009). The daily reported under the headline; "EU at Odds With Itself on Climate Costs," and wrote: "the European Union is not making progress in its preparations for the climate protection conference in Copenhagen. The 27 EU members are at odds with each other not only about the costs for the fight against global warming but also about targets for reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. This is the content of the draft resolutions for the European Council of finance ministers (Ecofin) and the European Council of environment ministers. Both councils will meet tomorrow and the day after tomorrow in Luxembourg. But Brussels' diplomats doubt that the meetings will lead to an agreement. But time is pressing because the EU leaders, during their summit at the end of this month, want to approve a joint position. An agreement is all the more important because the British and Americans are already spreading optimism that there will be a global agreement in Copenhagen. U.S. envoy Todd Stern, said: 'I think an agreement is possible.'"

Under the headline: "U.S. Considers Climate Deal To Be Possible," Financial Times Deutschland (10/19) reported: "Irrespective of the brief time, the United States and Great Britain think than an agreement at the Copenhagen Climate Summit is still possible. Officials from both states said that other nations such as Japan, Indonesia, India, and China have already reached agreements on targets. U.S. chief envoy Todd Stern said in London: 'I think an agreement is possible.' During the meeting in London, pressure on the United States is mounting for it to approve concrete steps to protect the climate. It is the last meeting in a series of meetings initiated by the United States. These meetings should also find answers to questions such as how to finance improved energy efficiency and adaptation cost as a consequence of climate damages."

Frankfurter Rundschau (10/19) carried an editorial on the decision of the Maldives government to carry out a Cabinet meeting under water.

The daily judged: "President Mohammed Nasheed is a clever man. With his spectacular underwater Cabinet meeting he made it into almost all papers in the world. This is good. Shortly before the important Copenhagen Climate summit, it makes clear that the issue in Copenhagen

is not solely abstract temperature curves, carbon dioxide figures and billions of euros, but that the issue is people."

Regional daily Sdkurier of Konstanz (10/19) judged: "Mohammed Nasheed had quite a few ideas of attracting attention of the global public to the misery of his island state. Now the President of the Maldives submerged with his full Cabinet. In this paradise-like world of islands it is more obvious than anywhere else how dramatic the impact of climate change is. The underwater Cabinet approved an ardent appeal to the Copenhagen climate conference. But in the petty bickering of Copenhagen, the appeal will go unheard. And a depressed President Nasheed will again have to explain to his citizens that those who have the say in Copenhagen do not (yet) know what it means to be up to one's neck in water."

Die tageszeitung (10/19) opined that "this dive into the Indian Ocean is sending the signal to Copenhagen that there is no room for national egotism in the climate debate. At the conference, humanly thinking states must stand for an engaged climate protocol and if this is not implementable, a unilateral move of the good-willing is necessary."

MURPHY